Expansion of Rural Telecom Network

1572. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to expand rural telecome network during the Tenth Five Year Plan period;

(b) if so, the programmes drawn up in this regard;

(c) the target set therefor; and

(d) the circle-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The programme drawn up for expansion of rural telephony is given below:

(i) Affordable & effective communication facilities to all citizens.

(ii) Provision of universal service to all uncovered areas including rural areas.

(iii) Encouragement to development of telecom in rural areas making it more affordable by suitable tariff structure & making provision of rural communications mandatory for all fixed service providers.

(iv) Achieve telecome coverage of all villages in the country and provide reliable media to all the exchanges in rural areas.

(c) The specific targets indicated for the rural areas are:

(i) Increase rural tele-density from the level of 1% to 3% by March, 2007 and to provide reliable transmission media in all rural exchanges by the year 2003.

(ii) Achieve telecom coverage of all villages in the country by the year 2003.

(iii) Areas of North East, Jammu and Kashmir and other hilly regions tribal blocks, etc. to be identified as special thrust areas for accelerated development of telecommunications.

(d) During the Tenth Five Year Plan the targets set by BSNL for providing telecom facility in rural areas during 2002-03 are 9.4 lakhs and during 2003-04 are 8.61 lakhs tentatively. The circle wise details are set annually and the target for 2003-04 is given in the Statement.

Statement

Circle wise details regarding expansion of rural telecom network by BSNL annually and the target for 2003-04

Sl. No.	Circle	Tentative Target for 2003-04 for Rural Areas
1	2	3
1	Andaman and Nicobar	1000
2	Andhra Pradesh	15000
3	Assam	20000
4	Bihar	60000
5	Chhattisgarh	10000
6	Gujarat	27000
7	Himachal Pradesh	19000
8	Haryana	43000
9	Jammu and Kashmir	15000
10	Jharkhand	24000
11	Kerala	106000
12	Karnataka	48000
13	Maharashtra	71000
14	Madhya Pradesh	29000
15	North East-I	7500
16	North East-II	11500
17	Orissa	25000

1	2	3
18	Punjab	38000
19	Rajasthan	54000
20	Tamil Nadu	38000
21	Uttaranchal	10000
22	Uttar Pradesh (East)	54000
23	Uttar Pradesh (West)	50000
24	West Bengal	85000
25	Kolkata	0
26	Chennai	0
	TOTAL	861000

Access to Computers

1573. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the majority of people do not have access to computers;

(b) whether it is also a fact that computers are too high priced to reach the middle classes;

(c) whether any effort is being made to ensure that the prices of computers are contained within the reach of a majority of the people; and

(d) the details of the steps Government have taken for availability of computers at lower prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI S.U. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir.

(c) In order to bring the benefits of Information Technology to larger cross section of people, the policy, procedure and tariff framework, is continuously reviewed.